Chapter 7
TAIL GROUPS AND LODGES

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WHY TAILS?

“I like to wear my Beaver tail because it makes me look like a real beaver.” You’ll hear these words from many Beavers. The Beaver tail is important to them because it’s part of their magical world, and they identify very closely with real beavers.

Beaver tails symbolize the stages of development different age groups are going through. They’re concrete recognition that the children are growing bigger physically and developing socially and emotionally.

Chapter 6 talks about understanding and working with Beavers. It also looks at characteristics and abilities of children in the Beaver age group, and suggests leaders take them into consideration when building programs. Tail groups are designed to help you do this effectively.

PURPOSE OF TAILS

Beaver tails have a special purpose. They are meant to celebrate personal change and growth in children at their specific age. Goals include, to:

- Provide a means to build Beavers’ self-esteem by positive recognition of personal growth and development.
- Provide Beavers with the opportunity to interact with peers who are at a similar stage of development.
- Help leaders plan programs by grouping Beavers of similar abilities and levels of understanding.

TAIL COLOURS

The colours used for the Beaver tails (brown, blue and white) echo traditional Beaver colours and shades of brown and blue used in the Beaver hat and flag. They also reflect colours in nature.

Brown represents the colour of wild beavers’ fur, and the Earth where we live and where things grow. (Remind Beavers of their responsibility to help take care of the world.) Brown can also symbolize a time of discovery, when Beavers are entering a new phase in life and discovering a broader world beyond family and close friends.

Blue represents the sky and water. It symbolizes the immense opportunities to explore now opened up to Beavers whose abilities are expanding and changing.

White is the colour of the moon and the stars. They give us light to help us find our way through the darkness of the night. As well, white symbolizes distant goals – seemingly far away, but attainable.

Don’t limit yourself to these ideas. Use the colours to mean many things in your program.
DETERMINATION OF TAIL COLOUR

When Beavers join your section, fit them into tail groups under these guidelines:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Typical Age</th>
<th>Tail Colour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>Brown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 years</td>
<td>Blue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 years</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before Swim-up</td>
<td>White with Magic Light symbol</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Generally, a five-year-old Beaver will wear a brown tail; a six-year-old will wear a blue tail; and a seven-year-old will wear a white tail. They remain in those tail groups for the Scouting year.

In early fall, give a Beaver who is still five, but soon to be six, a blue tail so the child will be in the same tail group as peers who have already had their sixth birthday. Similarly, give a six-year-old (but soon to be 7) a white tail.

Based on the needs of each Beaver, the colony leadership team has to decide what the word “soon” means in actual time. What’s the most important consideration? It’s the Beaver’s comfort level within the group – the child’s ability to feel a sense of belonging and accomplishment.

Because Beaver-aged children show marked individual differences in their rate and degree of growth, you can’t expect all Beavers with the same colour tails to interact and perform at the same level in all activities. But more Beavers in a tail group will be at a similar developmental level than those in a lodge group where ages (and stages) range from five to seven years.

Consider the ages suggested for these various tail colours as only guidelines. Be flexible. You may encounter an exception (e.g. a Beaver who is developmentally impaired for physical, mental or social reasons). In these exceptional cases, the leadership team, in cooperation with the parents, needs to determine where a child with certain abilities and a certain degree of maturity will be able to function most effectively.

Make every effort to move each Beaver through the program and the three tail groupings. It’s important to ensure that every seven-year-old wears a white tail, and is ready to move to Cubs when eligible to join that section when the youth reaches eight years old.

You can successfully use tail groupings for crafts, games, stories, outings, etc. Just vary the difficulty of the tasks to suit the stages of Beaver development and relative abilities.

Tail groupings are most effective when used in partnership with lodge groupings. Lodges are similar to family units (children of different ages), and offer Beavers opportunities for different kinds of interaction (e.g. older Beavers helping younger ones, and younger Beavers looking to older ones for leadership).

PROGRAM USE OF TAILS

Tails are an important way to show Beavers they are growing and changing. Five, six and seven-year-olds have some noticeably different needs (discussed in Chapter 6). Tail groups will help you plan a program in which all Beavers can work at their respective levels of ability. You can apply tails to programs in several ways.
Use the tail and lodge systems to your advantage. Youth at different ages have different skills and abilities. Focus the program to one age level through tails or have older youth work with younger ones in the lodges.

**By Colony**
When you organize the whole colony into tail groups, you give Beavers the chance to play with their peers in small groups. When they share and work together at their level of maturity, Beavers have the freedom to grow at their own pace.

**By Lodges**
You can break lodge activities into tasks that enable all Beavers to work at their ability level, and feel like full contributing members. For example, if the activity is to create a lodge picture, Brown Tails can colour, Blue Tails can glue, and White Tails can cut shapes for glueing.

Strike a balance in the way you use tail groups. Sometimes Beavers want to be with others their own age. Other times, they prefer the security of a family setting, and the chance to be with older or younger friends.

In both settings, the important thing to consider is providing activities at the ability level of each age. That way, Beavers learn that each person’s achievement can contribute to the whole group (tail group, lodge or colony), or stand by itself.

**benefits of lodges**
Just as there are developmental benefits when children play with Beavers of similar age, there are other benefits when children play with Beavers who are younger or older. Scouting seeks to help develop the whole child. A balance between playing in tails and mixed-age lodges provides the most complete growing experience.

Because of their small size, lodges offer Beavers a feeling of safety; lodges also give leaders a way to maintain control and fun in the colony. There’s one caution... When you work with lodges, you may find you tend to do things at a White Tail’s ability level, which leaves Blue and, especially, Brown Tails feeling they’ve been cast adrift. If you’re aware of this tendency, avoid it. Your lodge activities will provide Beavers with some extremely positive benefits.
Belonging
Perhaps the most important function of lodges is that they provide a feeling of belonging. The lodge is a “family,” complete with a name and older and younger friends. A healthy feeling of belonging can help Beavers develop empathy and a capacity to understand other Beavers’ points of view.

Studies have shown that physical appearance (such as size and attractiveness) can influence peer acceptance. Studies have also shown that children as young as four years old can discriminate on the basis of race. Through lodges, Beavers learn to see people’s differences as something positive; they begin to understand that everyone brings special skills and abilities to the lodge.

Activities that strengthen lodge identity and promote social interaction and sharing help build a sense of belonging in Beavers.

Trust
When Beavers feel they belong to a lodge and the overall colony, it enhances their sense of trust. Trust is very important in developing friendships, listening to leaders, and accepting new or changing experiences.

Beavers are more likely to approach new situations eagerly in a lodge environment that gives them a sense of safety and security. You can build trust by encouraging Beavers to help one another, share and play together cooperatively in lodge activities.

Initiative
Finally, when the lodge provides a sense of belonging and trust, it gives Beavers the support base that enables them to risk striking out on their own. You see this when Beavers begin to talk more, and share their ideas. Enhance the feeling by being an active and interested listener. It shows you consider each Beaver a unique and special person.

Cheer on Beaver attempts at trying new things. It helps them to cope with guilt feelings that may come from fear and fumbling. A pat on the back and praise after a good try are great initiative builders.

Tail groupings provide Beavers with a healthy sense of competence in their abilities. Lodge activities provide opportunities to promote feelings of belonging, trust and initiative. Use both kinds of groups. Together, tails and lodges provide a well-rounded growing experience for children.

CHOOSING A LODGE PATCH
When choosing a lodge patch, Beavers and leaders have many options to consider. Lodges can opt to make a felt lodge patch based on the Beavers’ ideas and preferences. This choice provides opportunities for creative ideas and craft activity. As well, it builds lodge unity.

If the felt becomes worn because of normal play, lodges can make a brand new patch. Beavers may even choose to give it a different design because their ideas have changed as they’ve developed. Instead of felt, you might decide to use polyester or another long-wearing fabric.

With the growth in emblem and crest technology, some Beavers may prefer an embroidered lodge patch. An embroidered animal crest provides opportunities to link the lodge to nature, Friends of the Forest, and the Beaver Promise.
Your Beavers may wish to combine the two ideas; that is, design their own crest but have it
made in a way that looks neater and wears longer than a self-made felt symbol. Consult
your local Scout Shop for approved embroidery businesses.

Beavers might also enjoy learning how to do some simple silk screening, and make their lodge
patch using this technique.

Here's another idea. Use potatoes as printing blocks. Carve the lodge symbol into the potato,
then let the Beavers dip it into waterproof ink and stamp it onto a cloth square.

One important element remains, whatever style, design or material you use – the Beavers them-
sew themselves decide on their lodge name and symbol. Help them by giving as many options as possi-
ble for lodge patch selection.

ACTIVITY IDEAS FOR TAILS AND LODGES

Here are some activity ideas that use tail groups and lodges. Adapt them to suit your own needs
and ideas. Check Chapter 6, and try to match them with the characteristics and abilities of each age.

How do you decide when to run activities by tails or by lodges? These guidelines may help.

There are times in your program where an activity is best done in a larger group setting or
sometimes, a smaller setting such as lodges or tail groups is best. Consider how the activity may
work by experiencing it as a large group, a small group like a tail level or an intimate group
such as a lodge. When working with a larger group:
  ▶ it may be easier to plan or require fewer materials for an activity,
  ▶ everyone will get the same experience such as a story,
  ▶ and your Beavers benefit from a sense of belonging.

In smaller groups:
  ▶ youth are more likely to participate,
  ▶ good opportunities are provided for leaders to know youth,
  ▶ and activities such as crafts may be more successful due to closer supervision.

For Tails
Activities that introduce or involve doing something new (e.g. theme crafts, an unfamiliar song
or skit, complex or skill games) are great for tail groups.

For Lodges
Activities with a cooperative and exploring/discovery spirit (e.g. noncompetitive games, nature
hikes, familiar songs) are terrific for lodges. A Brown Tail is as likely as a Blue or White Tail to
find two pine cones on a nature hunt, or to sing out the verses to a favourite song.

By Lodges
Nature Scavenger Hunt
Here's a good activity for an outdoor program. For about an hour, each lodge collects things a
squirrel (or some other animal) might use. One or two leaders accompany each group to help the
Beavers find fallen objects so they don't damage trees and shrubs as they collect their samples.
Later, come together in lodges where Beavers, in turn, show what they found. Let them tell what it means to them. Then suggest ways your Beavers can display their collections.

The Beavers help each other build individual displays which, when put together, make up a lodge display. Finally, they choose someone to describe the lodge display to the whole colony.

**By Tails in Lodges**

*Advertisement Hunt*

Give each lodge a magazine containing many advertisements, some craft paper and a list of items for Beavers to find in the magazine (e.g. an ad for toothpaste, cereal, shampoo). Brown Tails can find the ads, White Tails can cut them out, and Blue Tails can tape or glue them to the paper.

*Moving Relay*

Line up your Beavers in lodges with the White Tails at the front, Blue Tails behind and Brown Tails at the back. The purpose of the game is to let Beavers try new ways of moving, and give them a chance to encourage each other. Reserve the most difficult tasks in the relay for your White Tails.

- Somersault to the end.
- Hop on one foot, hands behind back.
- Crab Walk. (Sit with your back to the finish line, place your hands palms down on the floor behind, and lift your bottom and walk.)
- Foot and Nose. (Hold your right ankle with your right hand, and your nose with your left hand. Hop to the finish.)
- Dizzy Izzy. (Run to the finish line, place your forefinger on the floor, and run around your finger three times.)
- Oyster Walk. (Place a large elastic band around your ankles, and walk to the finish line.)

Remember, you can do these activities indoors and out.

**By Tail Groups**

*Mother's Day Wall Plaque*

**Brown Tail**

Leaders prepare all the materials: cut the paper and ready the plaque design or the actual plaque. The Beavers simply assemble and decorate the plaque with the help of a leader or Keeo.

**Blue Tail**

The Beavers choose pictures, and cut out what they want to put on their plaques. Leaders may not have to help very much with the cutting and glueing.

**White Tail**

Simply act as guides and helpers for these Beavers. Let the children shape the plaques – an excellent opportunity to develop dexterity and hand/eye coordination. If the material is wood, they can also sand and stain them. Depending on their abilities, they may use découpage to decorate their plaques.
Music

*Brown Tail*

Explore the many ways you can make music. Demonstrate by singing, tapping feet and clapping hands. Play a tape or CD, and move with the rhythm – walk, sway, run, skip, march. Learn to sing a short song.

Make shakers and tom-toms from plastic bleach bottles. Use sticks, wooden blocks, tom-toms, and shakers to make music.

Make a collage of pictures of musical instruments.

*Blue Tail*

Talk about how music affects animals like cows, dogs and birds. Take your Beavers to visit a band during its rehearsal. Learn the names of different instruments. Make tambourines from two paper plates and bottle caps in which you’ve punched holes. Glue plates rim-to-rim; tie bottle caps in pairs around the edge.

*White Tail*

How do different kinds of music (happy, sad, soft, loud) affect Beavers? Play CDs or tapes to demonstrate. Feel the vibrations of the music. Visit a church to hear the organ. Learn how many strings are on a violin, banjo and guitar. Tell stories about famous musicians. Make hand shakers from bottle caps by punching holes in them and threading them on wire loops. Cover combs with tissue paper and learn to play them.

*As a Colony*

Hold a musical evening and invite guests. Use the instruments Beavers have made in a sing-song. Leaders might make a gutbucket or play washboards and jugs. Perhaps someone can play a guitar or piano. Invite guests to teach the colony songs in different languages.

*Helping*

Let your Beavers set up the meeting place, and tidy up after the meeting. Give a different tail group a special chore to do each week, according to the ability of the Beavers in that group. Post the duty roster where Beavers can see it (e.g. Special Duty Tonight – Blue Tails). Perhaps Keeo can supervise these duties.

**BUSY BEAVERS (WHITE TAILS)**

White Tails are in transition from Beavers to Cubs. Busy Beavers wear the white tail and are preparing to leave the colony to swim up to the Cub pack. When programming for these Beavers, remember to take into account their experience, maturity and need to be prepared for Cubs. One
way to keep the interest of older Beavers is to spend time in tail groups each meeting or every few meetings. There, when all White Tails are together, you can do things aimed particularly at their stage of development; program special stories, projects, outdoor activities, or visits that will hold their interest until pre-Cub preparations begin.

Before tail celebration time, have the leadership team contact the closest Cub pack to find out if there will be room for the Beavers who are ready to swim up to Cubs. (For more information on swimming-up, see Chapter 12, Ceremonies.)

Activities for White Tails reflect the fact that older children are developing initiative and looking for chances to become responsible persons. Busy Beavers can:

- Help collect dues and exchange them for wood chips to feed the Beaver.
- Set up and dismantle flags.
- Help Brown Tails with crafts.
- Take part in a special introduction to camping with a parent, guardian, relative or adult friend.
- Visit a Cub camp, and take part in some of the program.
- Plan, organize and participate in a special craft project they work on for a length of time each week over the period of a month.

WHITE TAIL ACTIVITIES

Sometimes it’s difficult to maintain the interest of older Beavers. At times, you may want to build a program activity specially for their age group while other tail groups pursue other interests.

White Tails are able to do projects that take more than one week. You can plan for this and prepare them for the more structured Wolf Cub program by helping them become more self-reliant.

White Tails want to be helpful and feel important. Some colonies use this characteristic to their advantage by encouraging them to help younger Beavers. Ask them to give important, meaningful help and they will give it with a tremendous sense of responsibility and duty.

Each week, a White Tail can help Hawkeye or Keeo with a part of the program. Or you may invite each White Tail to prepare and tell a story to the colony or a group of Brown Tails. Let the White Tails choose their own stories, but help by offering suggestions such as (a) my favourite smell (b) my favourite toys (c) sports (d) sharing (e) animals or (f) friends.

If you have a CD player, invite White Tails to bring in their favorite CD's to share with the colony.

White Tail Beavers are ready for some individual projects. All Beavers benefit from group projects. Design them on a common theme, giving each tail group something different to do, then bring the whole colony together to show and talk about what they’ve done.
Transportation Theme
Here’s a suggestion for a theme you can program for several weeks. They need not be consecutive.

Basic Transportation

Feet
Beavers draw an outline of a foot, and colour it.

Discuss
Working animals, and transportation (e.g. horses, oxen, dogs, sleighs, covered wagons).

Ships and Boats
If possible, arrange a trip to docks or locks. Ask these questions: Who used the earliest ships? What did they look like? What powered them? From what materials were they made? Who built them? How are they different from the boats of today?

Get pictures of boats from a travel agency. Pick a country and plan a boat trip with pictures of the people, food, trees and flowers. Among parents, you might find someone who has lived or visited that country willing to talk to the Beavers about the national dress, traditions, games, songs, etc.

Trains
Take a short trip by train. What powers trains: steam, diesel, electricity? Look for a retired train engineer who might come in to tell your Beavers about his experiences.

Talk about what freight trains carry. Draw a large map of Canada with provinces roughly outlined. On the map, get Beavers to sketch in tracks leading to each province. Then draw pictures of trains, and glue them on the map. Bring in pictures of manufactured goods, or produce to glue to each province.

Visit someone who has a model train layout, or make a trip to a science museum.

Automobiles
Ask your White Tails to bring in pictures of different car parts, learn what they are, and make a collage from them. Your Beavers may draw their personal dream cars, and combine the drawings to make a book to send to a sick Beaver.

Teach road safety. Help your Beavers to make road signs, learn what they mean, and demonstrate the meaning to younger Beavers. Ask each White Tail to bring in a favourite toy car for “show and tell.”

Planes and Balloons
Find out how many different types of planes the White Tails know (passenger, cargo, bush, crop spraying, fighter, sea, helicopter). Pick up a storybook about balloons from the local library.

Please do not release helium balloons as an activity. Deflated balloons become litter, and can injure wildlife who mistakenly eat them.
Space Travel
Tell space stories. Discuss weightlessness, and how your Beavers would react to being weightless while walking on the moon. How would they move? Eat? Help your Beavers to make rockets and space helmets from foil-covered cardboard cartons, and their imaginations.

KEEO

For an in-depth understanding of Keeo’s place in the colony, read Scouts Canada’s *The Keeo Book*. With the help of your Service Scouter, you and other colony Scouters in your Council may want to organize a day for local Keeos to learn about their role. And, of course, make sure your Keeo has a copy of *The Keeo Book*.

With the cooperation of the Cub leader, give Keeo some responsibilities for readying your White Tails for Cubs. To ensure the White Tails will want to swim up and make a firm link between the program sections, arrange for a Cub leader to visit them at the pond and then for them, with Keeo, to visit a pack meeting.

Get together with a Cub leader to discuss what Keeo should tell your Busy Beavers. Some possible areas are:

- How the Cub pack meets and what it does (the six system, Cub salute, Grand Howl).
- The seven elements of the Cub program (playacting, games, outdoors, crafts, story-telling, spiritual fellowship and music).
- Stars and badges (how Keeo earned his).
- The jungle theme (the names of the Old Wolves, and who they represent). Encourage Cub leaders to work with Keeo to help the youth plan what he or she will do with the Busy Beavers. For example, Keeo will not teach them the Cub Promise and Law, because that job is reserved for Akela. (See Chapter 12, Ceremonies)

Throughout the year before Swim-up, set aside time each meeting when Keeo can talk to Busy Beavers about Cubbing.

Have Keeo invite the Busy Beavers to a Cub meeting four to eight times over the year, where Keeo can introduce them to the pack, and the pack can include them in the program. Keeo may also invite them to join the pack on a day outing. Discuss the program and invitations with Keeo and the Cub leaders.

GUIDELINES FOR LINKING BEAVERS TO THE CUB PROGRAM

Linking the colony with the pack is a critical aspect of encouraging Beavers to move on to Cubs. For Beavers, a sudden change to a pack environment can create a high level of anxiety in a seven to eight-year-old child who has grown accustomed to colony routines. To encourage a successful transition from Beavers to Cubs, White Tail Beavers should have a gradual and rewarding exposure to pack activities over the course of the year. In keeping with their age characteristics, White Tail Beavers can be considered in transition from Beavers to Cubs. Here are some linking concepts to consider.
1. Linking Colony and Pack Leaders

In the beginning of the Scouting year, colony and pack leaders should meet to discuss having White Tail Beavers participate in a series of pack meetings and events. Close cooperation between section leaders is essential for creating a positive experience for all the children involved. Compare and schedule program plans to accommodate both sections. White Tails do not have to wait until the spring to get involved in a pack. It’s better to have them visit a number of times over the course of the year to build their comfort level and familiarity with pack routines and Cub leaders. Since White Tails are in transition from colony to pack, let White Tails spend four to eight meetings or more participating in pack activities. Blending the security and familiarity of Beavers with the excitement and challenge of Cubs is a positive step in meeting the White Tails changing personal developmental needs. How often White Tails go to the pack will depend on the children involved, and the programs offered in both the colony and pack at certain times of the year. Keep parents informed as much as possible about program changes.

2. General Guidelines for Beaver Leaders

After making arrangements with the Cub leaders, spend time meeting with your White Tails to introduce them to the idea of visiting the pack for special activities. Keep can help tell the White Tails what goes on in a pack. Invite a Cub leader to visit the colony and talk with your White Tails about what the pack does and the various activities the children will be involved in over the course of the year.

When it’s time for the White Tails to begin visiting pack meetings, a colony leader should accompany the Beavers. What’s the Beaver leader’s role? The Scouter will provide a friendly adult face to the White Tails, and help pack leaders with the extra children. Colony leaders can rotate this job, but it’s best to choose a colony leader who plans to move up to the pack the following year. This will provide additional emotional support to the White Tails who will eventually swim up. It also establishes a steady contact for both pack leaders and Beaver parents who have questions about White Tails attending Cubs. When White Tails are visiting the pack, don’t expect them and their Beaver leader also to attend colony meetings during the same week.

If White Tails have the opportunity to participate in a pack program that leads to them successfully completing a star or badge, the Beavers may be given the badge as long as they clearly understand that it is to be saved and worn on the Cub sash when they become invested. Earning a star or badge is not the purpose of attending pack meetings. Cub badges are not to be worn on the Beaver uniform, nor are Cub badges to be worked on during Beaver meetings. By following these guidelines, it preserves the non-competitive emphasis of the colony. Your White Tails will receive the extra program challenge often desired at this age, while creating gradual familiarity and anticipation to swim up to Cubs.

3. General Guidelines for Cub Leaders

After making arrangements with the colony, have a Cub leader visit the White Tails at a Beaver meeting. Talk to the children about what Cubs is about, what kinds of activities the pack does, and generally dispel any fears or answer questions the White Tails may have.

Review the pack’s schedule of activities that your White Tails are invited to attend. Include a note home to parents about the pack, and meeting details. Find out which Beaver leader will be accompanying the White Tails, and make the necessary arrangements.
Before the White Tails visit the pack, spend some time with the Cubs talking about having Beavers coming to the meetings. Discuss the importance of making the White Tails feel welcomed, and how the Cubs can look out for the Beavers. Creating a caring big brother or sister attitude in the Cubs will foster a warm and friendly meeting atmosphere. Twinning the White Tails with an older Cub may also help make your Beavers feel secure.

When the White Tails first arrive at the pack meeting, greet them with a special Grand Howl. After teaching the Beavers about the Grand Howl and how it is performed, let them take part in performing this ceremony.

In order to make White Tails, and other new Cub members feel accepted and part of the group, include all children in pack ceremonies. With brief instruction, any child may participate in the Grand Howl, which serves to create a sense of belonging in the child and team spirit in the pack.

After pairing the White Tails with a six and/or Cub, the Beavers may be involved in all pack activities. Part of the meeting should be reserved to instruct White Tails in Tenderpad requirements.

Try to include White Tails in a variety of pack programs throughout the year, such as outings, camping trips, banquets and other events beyond meetings. Before White Tails swim up to Cubs, encourage your White Tails to complete their Tenderpad requirements. At Swim-up, the White Tails can be invested as Cubs and presented with their Cub epaulets, and any previously earned stars and badges.

By providing White Tail Beavers with a coordinated and gradual exposure to pack activities, they will look forward to moving up to Cubs with eagerness. It will seem like a natural progression.